

South & East Leicestershire Area United Reformed Churches



**SAFFRON LANE, WIGSTON MAGNA, SOUTH WIGSTON,
OADBY, WHETSTONE, ABBOTS ROAD**

<http://selaunc.org.uk>

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Martin's Message

Dear Friends



When we consider the Christmas story you could easily associate it with a script from a major blockbuster. A story of good and evil and a cast of many, comprising of your key A list celebrities, consisting of an innocent young girl, her husband and a baby. We find them embroiled in this unfolding action packed drama of a bad king, angels and kings arriving in all their splendour. However, for most of us, advent season can be an experience of non-stop action. Yet in the middle of it all a sense of solitude can be encountered.

As a film buff, I am always intrigued by the many subliminal messages that can be discovered in films. Christmas is a time when we are exposed to heart warming messages that wish to connect with your emotions and to offer that warm comforting feeling. One particular film that goes to the heart of the true spirit of Christmas is the *"The Polar Express"*. A young boys journey of wanting to affirm his belief in Santa Claus, but in his efforts to find the truth, only discovers disbelief in Santa's existence. This idea would soon be disbanded as other children board the *"Polar Express"*, where the dreams of all that were once lost will be found! The young boys eyes light up on meeting Santa and given the gift of a bell. He is reminded that this gift holds the true message of Christmas to quote; *"the true spirit of Christmas lies within the boy's heart"*.

In the gospel account according to Luke, we hear the words of the shepherds as they entered the stable. They made known to Mary and Joseph what had been told to them about this child by the angels. Their response was to be amazed in what they heard, *"Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart"* Luke 2:19. To treasure things, means to value them. Mary pondered upon what

had happened, not just once but repeatedly. She tried continuously to make sense of what was happening and reflected upon those moments. We find this in her song, the "*Magnificat*" which exemplifies that she was immersed in God's Word. Mary is not only the mother of Jesus, but is also a model of faith to follow.

In recent years, we have lost the ability of pondering, standing still and listening for God's Word to speak to us. We have allowed our depth of knowledge to be overcome by the breadth of experience. The true spirit of Christmas is not just simply about facts or only about possessing the truth that lies within, but allowing it to transform us.

This advent season, don't allow this moment to surge over you and pass you by, otherwise you will emerge the other side weary and unchanged. We need to be more like Mary and to think through what it means to have "*God with us*" in the image of the Christ child. This year, in all the hustle and bustle, make space to spend some time in quiet stillness; to allow time to ponder upon the truth about the baby, God himself coming into the world for all humanity to rescue and redeem us.

Christmas blessings to you all!

Shalom

Martin

A Message from Revd Martin Ferris

Dear Friends

As in previous years, Charlotte and I will not be sending individual Christmas cards. We will be making a donation to charity. This year we have chosen to donate to The Heart of Kent Hospice. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful and blessed Christmas.

Shalom

Martin

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES

Whetstone URC	10.00 am
Oadby URC	10.15 am
South Wigston URC	10.30 am
Wigston Magna	10.30 am
Saffron Lane	11.00 am
Abbots Road	10.45 am

Please check with the relevant Church Secretaries to confirm when services are taking place at any of the Area Churches.

DEADLINE FOR FEBRUARY 25 MAGAZINE

Sunday 19 January 2025

**Send your items to your church representative or direct to
di.statham@btinternet.com**

**If you do not have a computer a hand written copy can be accepted.
Contact Di Statham 0116 296 2847 for information**

Worship Leaders for December 2024

Oadby	1	Eileen Williams
	8	Worship Group
	15	Revd David Howlett
	22	Revd Martin Ferris
	29	Revd Richard Eastman
Saffron Lane	1	Shirley Eastman
	8	R Waterton
	15	Revd Martin Ferris 4.00 pm
	22	Eileen Williams
	24	Revd Martin Ferris 11.30 pm
	29	Kevin West
South Wigston	1	Café Style Service led by Di Statham
	8	Shirley Eastman
	15	Noel Oldershaw
	22	Revd David Howlett
	29	Joint Service at Oadby URC
Wigston Magna	1	Revd Les Gill
	8	Ray Green
	15	Eileen Williams - Communion
	22	Carol Service
	24	4pm Julie Slatford - Christingle
	25	Revd Martin Ferris - 9.30 am
Whetstone	29	Worship Group
	1	Revd David Howlett - Communion
	8	Christmas Songs of Praise
	15	Candle Lit Carols - 5pm
	22	Revd Richard Eastman
	25	Kevin West
	29	Shirley Eastman
Abbots Road	1	Revd Martin Ferris - Communion
	8	Eileen Williams
	15	Revd Pam Smith
	22	Elders - Nativity
	22	Candle lit carols outside 4 pm
	25	Revd Pam Smith - Intergenerational Service
	29	Revd Pam Smith

Worship Leaders for January 2025

Oadby	5	Julie Slatford
	12	Revd Les Gill
	19	AM Revd Martin Ferris (CTO Pulpit Exch)
		PM Revd Martin Ferris (Week of Prayer For Christian Unity)
	26	Revd Richard Eastman
Saffron Lane	5	Ray Green
	12	Eileen Williams
	19	Revd Les Gill
	26	R Benham
South Wigston	5	Café Style Service Led by David Todd
	12	Revd David Howlett
	19	Eileen Williams
	26	Shirley Eastman
Wigston Magna	5	Revd Les Gill
	12	Julie Slatford
	19	Ray Green - Communion
	26	Revd David Howlett
Whetstone	5	Revd Richard Eastman - Communion
	12	Revd Martin Ferris
	19	Julie Slatford
	26	Eileen Williams
Abbots Road	5	Revd Pam Smith
	12	Eric Hanson
	19	Revd Richard Eastman
	26	Revd Martin Ferris

Regular Church Events

Oadby URC

Weekly Coffee Morning
Every Monday from 10.00 - 12.00 -
including Bank Holidays

11 O'Clock Club
1st & 3rd Thursday 10.30 am for 11.00 start

Ladies Group
4th Thursday 2.30pm - 4.30pm

Craft Group
4th Saturday 11.00 am - at 25 Chestnut Ave, Oadby

Whetstone URC

Community Coffee Morning Thursday 10.00 to 12.00

Saffron Lane URC

Weekly 3T's (Tea, Toast & Talk) Thursday 10.00 to 12.00

Wigston Magna

Community Cinema
Alternate Months from February - 1.30 pm

Sit Sip and Social
2nd Wednesday of each month 2pm - 4 pm

Coffee Morning
Every Saturday 10.00 am to 12.00 pm

South Wigston

Drop In with coffee / tea. 4th Wednesday of each month

Abbots Road

Lunchbox every Tuesday from 12.30pm - 3 course meal
£5.00

Quiz Wednesday evenings from 7.15pm (on Zoom)

Thursday Stay and Play and Little Borrowers toy library.
For children aged 0-4 years old and their parents/carers
10.00 to 11.30 £1.50 per family

Saturday Coffee Morning including a raffle, on Zoom
from 10.30am. Raising funds for our chosen charities.

Bible Bytes

Wednesday 4 December 2024

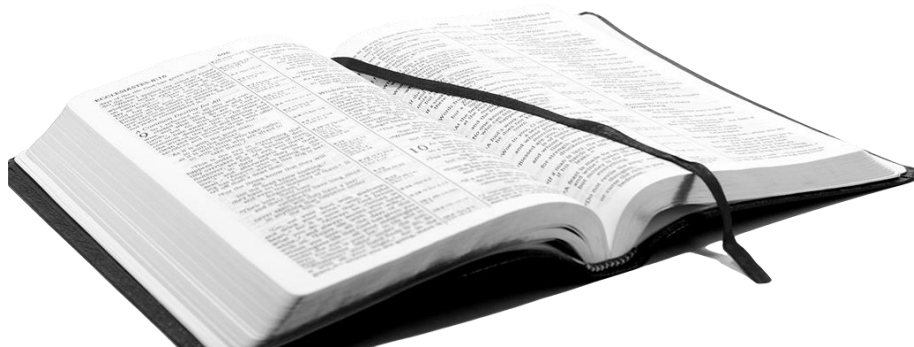
10.30 am

Saffron Lane URC

Come and enjoy a light and friendly discussion

No Need to be a " Bible Expert"

EVERYBODY welcome



Birthdays for December

December 3rd - Clare Allen

Birthdays for January

January 25th - Graham Wiggins



A message from Mary Childs:

Thank you for all the love, support and sympathy given to the family, following the death of Mum, Sheila Stephens.

Also a big thank you to everyone that attended the funeral and thanksgiving service.

We are very grateful for your support at this sad and difficult time.



Wigston Magna News
Wigston Magna Autumn Bazaar
2nd November 2024

Our Autumn Bazaar in early November was a busy scene with plenty of stalls selling a range of goods and a stall offering prizes from a well stocked raffle corner.

There were lots of people standing in line to buy a raffle ticket before going all around the church to sort through books on one stall or bric-a-brac on another. There were also delicious cakes to choose from or Christmas decorations and cards to buy.

Then after looking at and choosing from the stalls you could sit and enjoy a hot or cold drink and a biscuit from the coffee and tea bar. You could remain there chatting to friends until 12.00ish when it was time to make your way to the "primary room" where hot baked potatoes together with salad, beans, coleslaw, and cheese were all on offer for a tasty lunch. (Followed by a delicious dessert mmm.....).

Then before leaving for home there were lots of prizes to be won when the raffle was drawn.

A lovely friendly day out for everyone.

Grace



Wigston Magna News

Community Cinema at Long Street in November

For our last film of the year an exciting Agatha Christie story was shown.

Plenty of folk were eager to see it as even before the doors were opened people were queueing outside the church. When the doors opened people made sure that they had their raffle tickets and then made for the refreshment bar where they were able to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and choose from a range of cakes and biscuits. There was also a chance to meet up with friends to chat about the forthcoming film etc. Then the seats were quickly filled to watch the film.

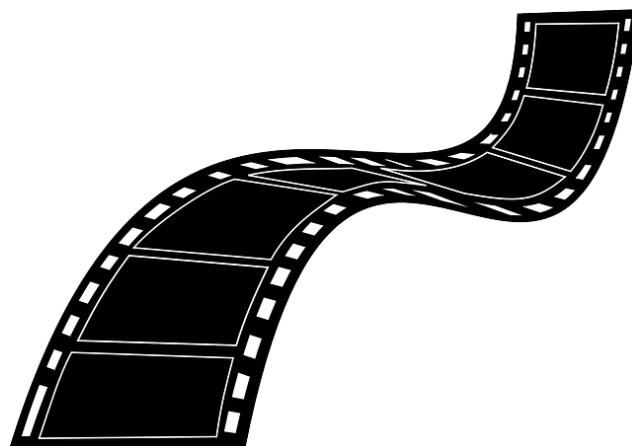
Afterwards there was the result of the raffle. The prize for which is always related to the film in some way.

Then it was time for home, unless you fancied another hot or cold drink and tasty cake or biscuit before venturing outside.

There was also a chance to find out about the next film, which will be in February 2025.

See you there folks !!!!!

Grace



Christmas 2024

at Wigston United Reformed Church

Sunday 1st December, 10.30am

Toy Service

Sat 7th / Sun 8th December

Christmas Tree Festival

Sunday 22nd December, 10.30am

Carol Service

Music by Magna Music Band

Tuesday 24th December, 4pm

Christingle Service

Wednesday 25th December, 9.30am

Christmas Day Service



Christmas Tree Festival

Saturday 7th December

10am to 4pm

Sunday 8th December

12 noon till 4pm

Soup Lunches will be served

Vote for your favourite tree!

Tea, coffee and cakes available

Also various stalls and raffle

Wigston United Reformed Church

Long Street, Wigston, LE18 2AJ

RECIPE: December - Beef and Chestnut Casserole (Serves 4)

1 lb stewing beef, cubed - thawed if frozen.
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 onion, chopped
1 tablespoon oil
6 ozs mushrooms, halved
Salt and ground black pepper
5 ozs fresh, whole chestnuts
9 fluid oz can of stout
2 ozs walnut halves
1 tablespoon cornflour blended with 2 tablespoons of water.

- 1) Fry beef, garlic and onion in the oil for 5 minutes.
 - 2) Add the mushrooms, salt and pepper and fry for a further 2 minutes.
 - 3) Slit chestnut shells, place in a pan, cover with cold water, and boil for 5 minutes. Shell, and remove inner brown skin.
 - 4) Place beef mixture and chestnuts in a casserole, and add the stout.
 - 5) Cover, and cook for 2 and a half hours at 325 F, 170 C, Gas 3.
 - 6) Add walnuts and cornflour mix, stir well, and cook for a further 20 minutes.
- Serve hot.



DECEMBER: Diary

4th - Bible Bytes 10.30am Saffron Lane Church.

18th - Elders' Meeting, 10.00am

December Birthdays:

9th Noel Oldershaw.

★ **HAPPY** ★
BIRTHDAY!

GARDENING TIPS - December

- 1) Order seeds, flower bulbs and plants for the coming year.
- 2) To prevent ice forming on ponds, install a pond de-icer, or float a ball in the water.
- 3) Remove dirty sand from the sand pit, keeping it to sprinkle on icy paths.
- 4) If ice forms on the pond, do not pour boiling water over it, as this will harm the fish.
- 5) Remember to feed your garden birds.
- 6) Check garden structures, such as trellises and fences, are secure and stable in preparation for winter storms.



South Wigston News

Happy Birthday Jasu

In November Jasu celebrated a special birthday (ending with a "0"). To celebrate this event the Church presented Jasu with a birthday cake for her to share with her family and friends.



THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

One sees great things from the valley,
Only small things from the peak.

Gilbert. K. Chesterton.

South Wigston News

Listen for Gods Prompting

I'm Busy, Busy, Busy
The folk are coming to us
Coming for the census
Decreed by Caesar Augustus

The inn is filling nicely
The cash is flowing in
But still so very much to do
That I don't know where to begin

Then this couple come
Knocking at the door
"I've no more rooms, I told you
No use asking any more !"

Then my wife appeared
"Her baby will soon be born !
We'll have to let them stay
The birth'll be before dawn"

"You know we're full"
"Sorry we're just not able"
"But there's the outside barn
Which we use as the animal stable"

The man called Joseph
Said "anything please
My wife Mary is so tired and
Really must take her ease"

cont

My wife took a brush
And swept the barn stable
We fenced off the animals
Made it the best we were able

Soon everything started to happen
The babe was born, a little lad
Then miraculous lights, singing angels
An adoring mother and proud dad !

The visitors came in their droves
From fields shepherds and their sheep
Wise Men came, from the east
All came to our stable to take a peek

That was a night and no mistake
When we took in strangers who we had banned
They needed help and we were the ones
Who did what God alone had planned

So if you're ever too busy
To help a needy someone
Remember me, the innkeeper
Who nearly turned away THE ONE

Lauren Fretter



South Wigston News

DECEMBER PRAYER LIST:

Please pray for:

- 1 All who preach the Word of God in our churches on this Advent Sunday.
- 2 All whose homes have been destroyed in the act of war.
- 3 All who are busy preparing services at this very busy time.
- 4 All who are struggling with poverty, especially parents who cannot afford presents for their children.
- 5 The bereaved, especially those facing Christmas for the first time without a loved one.
- 6 Those who volunteer to work for charities.
- 7 Young people who find life very difficult at home.
- 8 All those attending services in our churches today.
- 9 The Emergency Services we so often take for granted.
- 10 Families living in temporary accommodation.
- 11 All who are dreading Christmas, especially the homeless.
- 12 Those living in the Care Homes in our areas, and those who care for them.
- 13 The families of all who have been killed in conflict.
- 14 All who are suffering from depression.
- 15 Our friends in the other churches in our neighbourhoods.
- 16 Give thanks for friends and families.
- 17 All who are working to give food and shelter for those who have neither.
- 18 People whose loved ones are far away this Christmas.
- 19 Those suffering the loss of a child.
- 20 All who are lonely.
- 21 Those who have to work over Christmas.
- 22 Christians everywhere, attending Carol Services today.
- 23 Those who are spending Christmas in hospital.
- 24 Excited children everywhere, and their parents.
- 25 CHRIST IS BORN! HALLELUJAH!

Happy Christmas everyone!

- 26 All who have been separated from their families over Christmas.
- 27 Those who are facing debt now that Christmas is over.
- 28 Those who have spent Christmas in prison, and their families.
- 29 Those suffering from any form of addiction.
- 30 Give thanks for the blessings of the past year, and ask for God's guidance as we enter a New Year.
- 31 Peace throughout the world.

RECIPE: January - Cranberry & Tomato Chutney.

Delicious with leftover turkey, Stilton or ham.

400g fresh cranberries

400g cherry tomatoes

75g sultanas

1 small red onion, finely chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt

100ml water

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon each of ground black pepper, ginger and allspice

200g light muscovado sugar

100ml cider vinegar

- 1) Place all cranberries, tomatoes, sultanas, onion, salt and water in a heavy-based pan.
- 2) Heat gently, then simmer for 15 minutes, until cranberries burst and release their juices.
- 3) Stir in all spices, sugar and cider vinegar. Gently simmer for 30 - 40 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 4) Pour into sterilised jars.

Will store for up to 3 months.



GARDENING TIPS - January

- 1) Prune fruit trees and bushes while the trees are still dormant.
- 2) Plant deciduous hedges during mild, dry weather.
- 3) Firm newly planted heathers lifted by frost. Heathers may still be planted during suitable weather.
- 4) Move containers to a sheltered position.
- 5) Keep house plants warm with plenty of light. Water lightly, and do not feed unless they are flowering or growing strongly.
- 6) Roses may be planted if the soil is dry or just moist - not if it is wet or sticky, or if there is frost or snow on the surface.

January: Diary

8th Elders' Meeting - 9.30am

Church Meeting - 10.00am

22nd Drop-in 10.00am

31st Burns Night Dinner

BIRTHDAYS - January

30th Shirley Eastman & Sue Siddon



A THOUGHT FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

Peace is a journey of a thousand miles,
and it must be taken one step at a time.

Lyndon B. Johnson.

South Wigston News

JANUARY PRAYER LIST -

Please pray for:

- 1 All people of our world, that 2025 will prove a better year for everyone.
- 2 All those in war-torn countries as they face the uncertainty of a new year.
- 3 That this New Year may bring reconciliation and peace.
- 4 The people of Spain, still struggling with the aftermath of horrendous floods.
- 5 All those attending church services on this first Sunday of a New Year.
- 6 On this Epiphany Day, what gifts can you offer the Christ-Child?
- 7 The homeless, especially those sleeping on our streets.
- 8 All who have been displaced because of war.
- 9 The Elders in our churches.
- 10 Social workers and all who work for our N.H.S.
- 11 Our Ministry Team, Eileen and Martin, as they plan for the year ahead.
- 12 All who preach the Word of God in our churches today.
- 13 All who work for our Emergency Services.
- 14 Refugees and Asylum Seekers.
- 15 All who are ill, either physically or mentally.
- 16 All who are in need.
- 17 Those struggling to pay bills.
- 18 Children everywhere, especially those who are abused.
- 19 All who are reading the Word of God in our churches today.
- 20 Young people who will soon be sitting mock exams.
- 21 Those who need to attend Food Banks, and those who volunteer to help them.
- 22 All those caring for a sick loved one at home.
- 23 Victims of human trafficking.
- 24 Those who are exploring a call to Ministry.
- 25 All who are suffering from a terminal illness.
- 26 Those who cannot get to church today because of age or infirmity.
- 27 Our Service men and women, wherever they are serving.
- 28 Those who keep our streets clean.
- 29 All who have special needs, and those who help them.
- 30 For families who are separated by distance.
- 31 Peace throughout the world.



South Wigston URC are holding a

BURNS DINNER

**at
Oadby URC
Friday 31 January 2025
At 7.00 pm**

Cost - £15

**For information / to book a place
Contact Di Statham 0116 296 2847 / 07739 286489 or
di.statham@btinternet.com**

By Friday 17 January 2025

Please advise if Vegetarian Haggis is required

Saffron Lane News

Preachers and Readers list for December 2024 January 2025

	OT	NT	SERV	COLL	Preacher	
Dec 1 st	111	122	111	133	S Eastman	Communion
Dec 8 th	30	12	30	13	R Waterton	Communion
Dec 15 th	3	9	3	13	M Ferris	Carol Service 4PM SERVICE ONLY
Dec 22 nd	5	14	#	13	E Williams	Family Service
Dec 24 th	3	30	3 / 30	13	M Ferris	Communion 11.30pm
Dec 29 TH	36	6	#	13	K West	5 TH SUNDAY
Jan 5 th	7	8	7	13	R Green	Communion
Jan 12 th	12	30	12	13	E Williams	10.30 Communion Church Business
Jan 19 th	9	3	9	13	L Gill	Communion
Jan 26 th	5	5	5	13	R Benham	Family Service

3.Kath T	8. Brian S	12 Elizabeth R	Dec B
5.Sue B	9. Terri D	13.Darren C	# No server
6.Pat S	10.Malvolia B	14. Mackenzie B	
7.Angela S	11.Richard B	30 Sandra C	

Birthdays

December

No Birthdays

January

6th Brian Slater

16th Dec Beronski

17th Maureen Woolatt

Saffron Lane News

What's happened since the last magazine?

Remembrance Sunday

On November 10th, we had a very nice Remembrance service with Eileen Williams in the morning and had some wonderful cake to celebrate Elizabeth birthday.

We held our business meeting after the service to plan for what we need to happen at the Church in 2025.

Autumn Bazaar

On November 16th we held our Church Autumn Bazaar. We thank all the folks who came to help us set up for the Bazaar and all who helped on the day. It was a very busy time in the Kitchen cooking bacon and sausage cobs for everyone and the stalls were very busy. We were very happy to say that we took £381.76 on the day. I think a good day was had by all, but we were all glad to get home at put our feet up afterwards.

December Events

Please be aware that 3T's on Thursday will be closing for Christmas after the meeting on 19th December.

Sunday December 15th will be our Carol service. This will be at 4.00pm in the afternoon and will be led by Martin Ferris with tea and mince pies to follow. There will be **no morning service** on that day.

December 24th in the evening at 11.30pm our candle light communion service will be led by Martin Ferris

Saffron Lane News

SAFFRON LANE URC CHARITY DONATIONS 2024

Leicester Royal Infirmary Children's Heart Link Charity	£1840
From Eileen's Garden Party for Cat's Protection League	£50.00
From Group Service October DEC Middle East Appeal	£50.00
Total	<u>£1940.00</u>

Our Christmas Service collections will be Donated to Shelter.

Thank you to everybody who attended any of the events that enabled us to make these donations.



Saffron Lane URC

On behalf of Eileen and Elders, and everyone who attends our Church, we would like to wish all the other members and their friends in the Area Churches a very Happy Christmas and a Health. New Year

The First Christmas Day by Doreen Storton

A tiny babe laying in the hay,
Born to Mary on Christmas day:
He was sent by God, with love renowned,
The peace of the world he was to found.

Shepard's and Kings knelt down in prayer,
And honoured him with gifts most rare;
While angels sang their sweet refrain,
A new-born King was here to reign.

The cattle lowed near his flaxen head,
No sound did he make in that stable bed,
Unaware was he of the praises sung,
On the morn of the day his life begun.

And the brightest star that ever shone,
Was poised in the sky o'er the little one;
A sign from heaven to show the way
To where the baby Jesus lay.

And Mary gazed on her little son
With a gentle smile; her task was done;
His Father would show him the way of life,
And how to overcome each strife.

Blessings were given throughout the land,
And the angel choir at God's right hand
In harmony sang their Alleluia lay
For the King who was born on Christmas day.

Events for 2025

3T's will reopen after the Christmas break on Thursday 9th January.

On Thursday January 16th there will be a service for Prayers for Christian Unity. This will take place after 3T's and will start at 12.00 noon and will be followed by a soup lunch fellowship.

New Year's Eve by Doreen Storton

Goodbye to the old year, it's memories we'll store;
To look back and remember through time's open door.

There were many surprises, some gay, cheerful times;
Sorrow too we recall, as we hear the chimes,

We welcome the New Year, as the old one dies;
With a touch of nostalgia, and tears in our eyes.

Now into the future down a pathway unknown;
Whatever awaits us we'll tread not alone?

Only God knows the answer, he'll help us along;
A friend and Companion when things go wrong.

Have a Happy New Year

Whetstone News

Thank You's

Thank you to all who supported our fund raising Coffee Morning in October. The aim was to raise money towards a new cooker and a replacement lawn mower. We are truly grateful for your continued support.

Our new cooker arrived and after fitting, Kevin put it straight to task, providing potato wedges and dips for those who joined us for our Community Coffee Morning.

Thanks to Phil Stephens who not only sourced a replacement lawn mower for us but also delivered it and kindly cut the grass for us. Thank you, Phil! It was very kind of you and we are very grateful.

We thank Jon Brookes once again who has now completed the work in the Minister's vestry, creating secondary glazing to ensure that the room remains mould and damp free. Only the Choir vestry and kitchen to go now then Jon?

Thank you for the lovely flowers sent to me from the Harvest Festival. Sheila.

On Friday 15th October, the family and friends of Jean's sister, Linda, joined together at our church to say goodbye and to celebrate Linda's life. The Service was led by Rev. Richard Eastman and Jean's grandson, Matthew, was the organist.

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone for all the lovely cards, flowers and messages of sympathy sent to us on the sudden death of Linda, our much loved sister, sister-in-law and auntie. Her death was a huge shock to us but being surrounded by such a warm and loving Church Family has helped so much.

Our special thanks to Richard for a wonderful service, to Kevin for preparing the PowerPoint and to all those who helped on the day of the funeral. We really appreciate all of you. Thank you.

Love Jean and Bernard.

Whetstone News

Remembrance Sunday

Kevin led a lovely short, yet thought provoking service on Remembrance Sunday. Thanks to our own Carl who played a pipe lament during our service and then played at the War Memorial for the Churches Together In Whetstone Service. Kevin also participated in the village service, bringing the Gospel reading and laying a wreath on behalf of Whetstone URC

Forthcoming Events

On 30th November, we will be holding a charity Coffee Morning in aid of LOROS from 10 - 12. There will be tea, coffee, light refreshments bric-a-brac and a raffle. We hope that you will join us to raise money for this very worthy cause.

On Thursday 12th December, following our Community Coffee Morning, we will be holding a Christmas lunch.

The menu will be: roast chicken, stuffing, roast potatoes, Brussels, carrots, red cabbage, Yorkshire pudding, and gravy. Dessert will be apple crumble with custard or cream. The cost for this meal will be £7.50. Booking is essential so make sure your name is on the list at the back of the church! (Or contact Whetstone URC to add you name)

Our Candlelit Carol Service will take place on Sunday 15th December at 5:00 PM. (Please note: there will be no morning service.) As usual, this will be led by Bernard and Kevin.

Following the service, you are invited to join us for tea, coffee, mulled wine and warm mince pies. Please do join us, if you are able.

On Christmas Day, Kevin will lead a short service to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This will begin at the usual time of 10:00am and all are welcome.

Whetstone News

More Thank You's

As we draw close to the end of another year, we thank God for all His blessings upon us which have enabled us to raise over £1000 for national and international charities, as well as continuing to support our local community.

We thank our Elders for all their hard work and their commitment to ensure the longevity of our Church.

We pray for all our members and adherents and all the Churches in the South East Leicester Area and our Ministry Team.

Plans For 2025

Looking forward to 2025, we already have a range of events planned. These include :-

Four more Charity Coffee Mornings

An afternoon cream tea

Another "Music Hall Memories" evening

A "Seaside Special" lunch.

Dates for all events will be confirmed in the New Year. Look out for them

Until then, all at Whetstone United Reformed Church wish you a very Happy Christmas and every blessing for the New Year!



How to Get What you want for Christmas ???

It was coming up to Christmas and Sammy asked his mum if he could have a new bike. So, she told him that the best idea would be to write to Father Christmas. But Sam, having just played a vital role in the school nativity play, said he would prefer to write to the baby Jesus.

Sam went to his room and wrote

' Dear Jesus, I have been a very good boy and would like to have a bike for Christmas.'

But he wasn't very happy when he read it over. So he decided to try again and this time he wrote

'Dear Jesus, I'm a good boy most of the time and would like a bike for Christmas.'

He read it back and wasn't happy with that one either. He tried a third version.

'Dear Jesus, I could be a good boy if I tried hard and especially if I had a new bike.'

He read that one too, but he still wasn't satisfied. So, he decided to go out for a walk while he thought about a better approach. After a short time he passed a house with a small statue of the Virgin Mary in the front garden. He crept in, stuffed the statue under his coat, hurried home and hid it under the bed.

Then he wrote this letter.

'Dear Jesus, If you want to see your mother again, you'd better send me a new bike.'

Oadby Quiz Night 26th October 2024

Thank you to everyone who took part in our Quiz Night on Saturday 26 October.

There was a good combination of questions, food and fellowship with friends we haven't seen for a while, it was good to catch up.

We had four teams - "Must Try Harder", "Dolly Mixtures", "Invincibles" and "Tim's Girls". It was a close run match, congratulations to "Must Try Harder" who were the final winners.

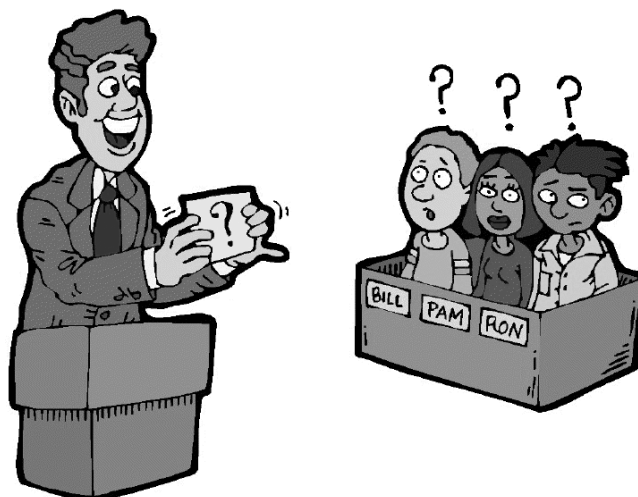
We had many gifts for the raffle, and everyone went home with something. Many thanks to all who contributed prizes.

Thank you also to all who helped in the preparation and clearing up afterwards.

A good evening was had by all.

See you next time.

Ann Craighead



THANK YOU LORD.

As we move towards Advent and onto the celebration of our Lord's birth. Let's give thanks for the summer months gone by.

Loving God, we come before you with hearts full of gratitude for the gift of the summer, for the warmth of the sun, the beauty of nature, and the time spent in fellowship with family, our church, our friends and community.

We are grateful for the moments of laughter, the shared meals, and the deep conversations that have brought us closer to one another and to you. Thank you for the opportunities to build new relationships and strengthen old ones, for the joy of shared experiences, and for your love which surrounds us all.

Now as we move on to travel through Advent to celebrate Christ's birth amongst us, we carry with us the memories and blessings that you have bestowed on us. May the bonds that we've formed continue to grow, and may the spirit of fellowship remain with us in all seasons.

We thank you for the ways you have shown your presence through love and companionship of others. May we always remember to cherish these gifts and use them to glorify you.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen



YOU'RE HAVING A LAUGH

These cold mornings are a nightmare, and as for the jump leads I bought the other day, don't even get me started!

I spent all night recording my part in the new My Little Pony movie, so I'm sorry if my voice is a little horse.

How did Mary and Joseph know that Jesus was 8lb 2oz when he was born?
They had a weigh in a manger.

What did the wise salesman say after his friends had already presented gold and frankincense?
But wait - there's myrrh!

What's the best Christmas present?
A broken drum, you just can't beat it.

A while back I was in a hotel lobby and I spotted a couple of chess enthusiasts bragging about past wins.
They were chess nuts boasting in an open foyer.

I got my wife a refrigerator for Christmas. I can't wait to see her face light up when she opens it.

How much did Santa pay for his sleigh?
Nothing, it was on the house!

My Christmas decorations are inflatable. I'm forever blowing baubles.

Who hides in the bakery at Christmas? A Mince Spy.

Why are Christmas trees so bad at sewing?
Because they keep dropping their needles.

What's green, prickly and flies through the air?
A holly-copter!

What's the difference between the Christmas alphabet and the normal alphabet?
The Christmas alphabet has "no-el"

Abbots Road News

Jesus Christ

(from June White)

Jesus Christ, born in poverty in a stable, is the greatest example of love that the world has ever seen.

He was born in an obscure village. He worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty. He then became an itinerant preacher. He never taught a lesson in a classroom. He had no tools to work with such as blackboards, maps or charts. He used no subject guidelines, kept no records, gave no grades and his only text was ancient and well worn. His students were the poor, the lame, the outcasts, the deaf and the blind.

The content of his method was the same for all who came to hear him and to learn from him. He opened eyes with his faith, he opened hearts with love, a love born of forgiveness. A gentle man, a humble man, he asked for and he won no honours, no gold awards of merit to his expertise and wisdom. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He had no credentials but himself. He was only thirty three when the public turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying his executioners gambled over his clothing, the only property he had on earth. He was laid in a borrowed grave.

All the armies that have ever marched , all the navies that have ever sailed, all the parliaments that have ever sat and all the monarchs that have ever reigned have not affected the life of man as much as he. For this quiet teacher from the hills of Galilee has fed the needs, fulfilled the hopes and changed the lives of many millions. For what he taught brought heaven to earth and revealed God's heart to mankind.

Abbots Road News

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Peace - especially praying for Ukraine and the Middle East

For pensioners who can't afford to pay their utility bills because they won't receive the Winter Fuel Payment.

For those who are homeless living on the streets and freezing during the winter weather.

For refugees who have no safe place to live.

For children who are being abused and fear telling anyone about it.

For all those who are due to have an operation and have fears about it.

For all those suffering from mental illness.

For families who have lost a loved one to suicide.

For our members and friends:

For the Walkinshaw family whose Mum, Margaret has recently died.

For Brian and Dorothy.

For Roy

For Anne and John

For Andrew and June

For Laurel

For the Seekers Alpha Course.

For our Ministry Team - Martin and Eileen.

For the mission and ministry of our SELA churches. And may we grow closer together.

WE WISH ALL OF OUR FRIENDS IN THE SELA CHURCHES A
VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR!
AS WE JOURNEY TOGETHER GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT
INTO THE FUTURE GOD CALLS US TO

Someone you know is preparing for their first Christmas without their husband, wife, mother, father, brother, sister, daughter or son. Others are preparing for their last. Regardless of the specifics, remember that this season of joy is often times a season of sorrow for many. Be kind, be generous, give love, give help; if nothing else, just don't give people a hard time.

ABBOTS ROAD CHURCH

INVITE YOU TO AN EVENING OF

**CHRISTMAS
ENTERTAINMENT**

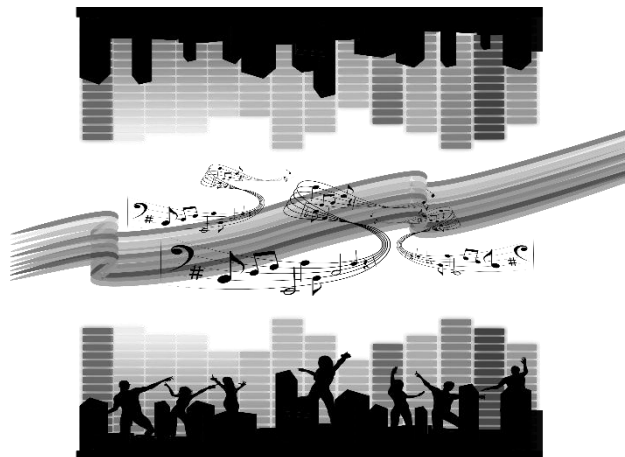
BY THE SYSTON HAPPY UKELELE BAND.

**ON SATURDAY 7TH. DECEMBER 2024
AT 6.30PM**

JOIN US FOR A FUN EVENING

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED
FREE ENTRY

DONATIONS FOR OUR CHARITY, 'MISSION POSSIBLE.'



Abbots Road URC Community Carols



**At the front of the church
Sunday 22nd December 2024
4pm**

**All are welcome to join us for a time
of festive singing and refreshments!**

SOME CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS AND AN EPIPHANY CUSTOM.

Mince Pies.

Most people like to eat Mince Pies, there is a staggering number made and eaten each year. Originally, they contained savoury minced meat with spices and other additions. Traditionally they were oval shape and said to represent the manger in which Jesus was laid. The tasty filling was a representation of the rich gift of Jesus. The tops were lattice pastry representing the hay on which Jesus rested.

Baubles

Baubles add colour and light hanging on a Christmas tree. It is said that they stem from the Roman tradition of hanging fruit from trees by way of decoration. The real fruit, especially apples, have been replaced by baubles in time. Although apples hanging from a tree resonates with the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and may remind us of the need for Christmas and the need for Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Epiphany

January brings us to the season of Epiphany. Some of our fellow Christians, including those in the Orthodox tradition, celebrate Christmas on this date and for many Epiphany is a significant date. An epiphany is a moment of sudden insight or understanding. With the Wise Men or Magi, representing the world of the Gentiles, this was the moment when Christ was revealed to the wider world.

There is a cake associated with Epiphany. The Galette Des Rois (King's Cake) popular in France. It is made of puff pastry filled with almond frangipane and scored to as decoration. The cake is often topped with a golden cardboard crown. Hidden within the cake is a small trinket known as a feve. Whoever receives the slice containing the feve, is then crowned 'king'.

WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

It isn't just because of the dangers we face from pollution, climate change, or other environmental problems - although these are serious. For Christians the issue is much deeper: We know that God created the world, and it belongs to him, not us. Because of this, we are only stewards or trustees of God's creation, and we aren't to abuse or neglect it. The Bible says, 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.' (Psalm 24:1)

When we fail to see the world as God's creation, we will end up abusing it. Selfishness and greed take over, and we end up not caring about the environment or the problems we're creating for future generations.

(Billy Graham)

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR THINGS TO DECOMPOSE?

A paper towel - 2-4 weeks	Apple core - 2 months
Banana peel - 3-4 weeks	Cardboard - 2 months
Paper bag - 1 month	Cotton glove - 3 months
Newspaper - 1.5 months	Orange peel - 6 months
Plywood - 1-3 years	Wool sock - 1-5 years
Milk cartons - 5 years	Cigarette butts - 10-12 years
Leather shoes - 25-40 years	Tinned steel can - 50 years
Foamed plastic cups - 50 years	Rubber boot sole - 50-80 years
Plastic containers - 50-80 years	Aluminium can - 200-500 years
Plastic bottles - 450 years	Disposable nappies - 550 years
Monofilament fishing line - 600 years	
Plastic bags - 200-1,000 years	

Wedding Celebrations with a Difference

I was invited to an unusual wedding yesterday. It was in Texas , in a large field with a reception in a barn . I was invited by the Bride, along with a small number of people to be part of the celebration by video .It was a small intimate gathering in Texas and on video (their choice)

A beautiful Christian wedding with their own Christian vows read. The wind was blowing very strongly and after the minister had read Corinthians13 he said the wind was like the Holy spirit blowing the faraway people's love and blessings close 🙏.

It really made me feel part of the ceremony. It was my cousin's granddaughter being married . He lives in Canada and had flown to Texas for the wedding.

My family may be scattered but Social media helps me keep in touch .
🙏❤️

Dorothy Russell



FAMOUS QUOTES - NEW YEAR WISHES

1. 'A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other'.

2. (Unknown).

2. 'Let our New Year's resolution be this: We will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word.'

(G. Persson)

3. 'This is a new year. A new beginning. And things will change.'

(Taylor Swift)

4. 'One thing with gazing too frequently into the past is that we may turn around to find the future has run out on us.

(M. Cibeuko)

5. 'Tomorrow is the blank page of a 365 page book. Write a good one.'

(B. Paisley)

6. 'In our perfect ways. In the ways we are beautiful. In the ways we are human. We are here. Happy New Year. Let's make it ours.'

(Beyonce)

7. 'Kindness, kindness, kindness. I want to make a New Year's prayer, not a resolution. I'm praying for courage.'

(Susan Sontag).

8. 'The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.'

(Eleanor Roosevelt)

Cont.....

9. 'An optimist stays up until midnight to see the New Year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.'

(Bill Vaughan)

10. Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.'

(Albert Einstein)

11. 'I think I made too many New Year's resolutions this year. It took me almost a full day to break them all.'

(Unknown)



Lectionary Readings - December 2024

1 December

Jeremiah 33.14-16;

Psalms 25.1-10;

1 Thessalonians 3.9-13;

Luke 21.25-36

8 December

Malachi 3.1-4;

Luke 1.68-79 (Benedictus);

Philippians 1.3-11;

Luke 3.1-6

15 December

Zephaniah 3.14-20;

Isaiah 12.2-6 (Canticle);

Philippians 4.4-7;

Luke 3.7-18

22 December

Micah 5.2-5a;

Luke 1.46b-55 (Magnificat);

Hebrews 10.5-10;

Luke 1.39-45(46-55)

29 December

1 Samuel 2.18-20,26;

Psalms 148;

Colossians 3.12-17;

Luke 2.41-52

Lectionary Readings - January 2025

5 January

Jeremiah 31.7-14;

Psalm 147.12-20;

Ephesians 1.3-14;

John 1.(1-9),10-18

12 January

Isaiah 43.1-7;

Psalm 29;

Acts 8.14-17;

Luke 3.15-17,21-22

19 January

Isaiah 62.1-5;

Psalm 36.5-10;

1 Corinthians 12.1-11;

John 2.1-11

26 January

Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10;

Psalm 19;

1 Corinthians 12.12-31a;

Luke 4.14-21